

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. In a mail processing system having a first and second print head for printing indicia, a method for processing a mail piece comprising:
  - determining if an indicium will be printed on the mail piece or on a tape;
  - if the indicium will be printed on the mail piece, printing the indicium on the mail piece utilizing both of the first and second print heads, each of the first and second print head printing a portion of the indicium; and
  - if the indicium will be printed on a tape, printing the indicium on the tape utilizing only a single one of the first and second print head.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein printing the indicium on the tape further comprises:
  - determining which one of the first and second print head will be used to print the indicium on the tape;
  - selecting the determined one of the first and second print head; and
  - using the selected one of the first and second print head to print the indicium on the tape.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein determining which one of the first and second print head will be used to print the indicium further comprises:
  - determining which one of the first and second print head was last used to print an indicium on a tape;
  - selecting the first print head for use if the second print head was last used; and

- selecting the second print head for use if the first print head was last used.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein determining which one of the first and second print head will be used is based on a predetermined pattern of usage for the first and second print heads.
  5. The method of claim 2, wherein determining which one of the first and second print head will be used is based on a date.
  6. The method of claim 2, wherein determining which one of the first and second print head will be used is based on a pseudo-random selection.
  7. The method of claim 2, wherein determining which one of the first and second print head will be used is based on a value of a register.
  8. The method of claim 2, wherein using the selected one of the first and second print head to print the indicium on the tape further comprises:  
positioning the tape such that the selected one of the first and second print head can print the indicium on the tape.
  9. The method of claim 1, wherein the indicium is an image including odd and even columns, and the portion of the indicium printed by the first print head when the indicium is printed on the mail piece includes one of the even or odd columns and the portion of the indicium printed by the second print head includes the other of the even or odd columns.
  10. A method for printing an indicium image in a mailing machine having a first and second print head, the indicium image being formed by columns and rows of dots, the method comprising:

printing all even columns of the indicium image with the first print head and all odd columns of the indicium image with the second print head when the indicium image is printed on a mail piece; and

printing all even columns and all odd columns of the indicium image with only one of the first and second print head when the indicium image is printed on a tape.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein printing all even columns and all odd columns of the indicium image with only one of the first and second print head further comprises:

determining which one of the first and second print head will be used to print the indicium image;

selecting the determined one of the first and second print head; and

using the selected one of the first and second print head to print the indicium image on the tape.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein determining which one of the first and second print head will be used to print the indicium image further comprises:

determining which one of the first and second print head was last used to print an indicium image on a tape;

selecting the first print head for use if the second print head was last used; and

selecting the second print head for use if the first print head was last used.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein determining which one of the first and second print head will be used is based on a predetermined pattern of usage for the first and second print heads.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein determining which one of the first and second print head will be used is based on a date.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein determining which one of the first and second print head will be used is based on a pseudo-random selection.

16. The method of claim 11, wherein determining which one of the first and second print head will be used is based on a value of a register.

17. The method of claim 11, wherein using the selected one of the first and second print head to print the indicium image on the tape further comprises:

positioning the tape such that the selected one of the first and second print head can print the indicium image on the tape.

18. A mail processing system comprising:

a first feed path for a mail piece;

a second feed path for a tape;

a first print head adjacent to the first and second feed paths;

a second print head adjacent to the first and second feed paths, the second print head being located downstream of the first print head;

a mail piece transport to transport a mail piece along the first feed path past the first and second print heads for printing an indicium thereon, each of the first and second print heads printing a portion of the indicium on the mail piece; and

a tape drive to drive a tape along the second feed path past the first and second print heads for printing an indicium thereon, only one of the first and second print heads printing the indicium on the tape.

19. The mail processing system of claim 18, further comprising:

a controller coupled to the first print head, the second print head, and the tape drive,

wherein the controller determines which one of the first and second print head will be used to print the indicium on the tape, and controls the tape drive to position the tape adjacent to the determined print head for printing of the indicium.

20. The mail processing system of claim 19, wherein the controller determines which one of the first and second print head will be used to print the indicium on the tape based on which one of the first and second print head was last used to print a previous indicium on a tape.

21. The mail processing system of claim 19, wherein the controller determines which one of the first and second print head will be used to print the indicium on the tape based on a predetermined usage pattern for the first and second print heads.

22. The mail processing system of claim 19, wherein the controller determines which one of the first and second print head will be used to print the indicium on the tape based on a date.

23. The mail processing system of claim 19, wherein the controller determines which one of the first and second print head will be used to print the indicium on the tape based on a pseudo-random selection.

24. The mail processing system of claim 19, wherein the controller determines which one of the first and second print head will be used to print the indicium on the tape based on a value of a register.
25. The mail processing system of claim 18, wherein the indicium is an image including odd and even columns of dots, and the portion of the indicium printed by the first print head when the indicium is printed on the mail piece includes one of the even or odd columns and the portion of the indicium printed by the second print head includes the other of the even or odd columns.
26. The mail processing system of claim 18, wherein the mail piece transport operates at a first speed, and the tape drive operates at a second speed, the second speed being slower than the first speed.